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Hampshire and Franklin  
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To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

The Joint Special Committee on Redistricting reports the attached bill “establishing executive councillor and senatorial districts.”

The Committee, more than ever before, made a concerted effort to involve the public in the redistricting process. It held an unprecedented thirteen public hearings across the Commonwealth and, for the first time, it created a website where it made documents, maps and data relevant to the redistricting process available to the public. At these hearings, through this website, and in other ways, the Committee invited the public, members of the General Court, civil rights and civic organizations to present their views, which many of them did. The Committee expresses its thanks to all of those citizens and organizations that provided information and views to the Committee.

In preparing the proposed Senate redistricting plan, the Committee took care to comply with all constitutional and legal requirements and endeavored to balance numerous and often competing traditional redistricting principles, including population equality, political continuity, equal electoral opportunity, compactness and contiguity, and the preservation of county and municipal boundaries and of other communities of interest.

The 2010 Census showed substantial shifts within the Commonwealth that have significantly affected the population of particular Senate districts. Applying the new federal census data to the existing Senate plan, the old districts deviate from the ideal population by an overall range of 18.43%.

It was incumbent upon the Committee to draw new senatorial district lines that redressed that malapportionment. The Committee started from the existing senatorial districts and made changes to serve legal requirements and other state interests. This approach substantially preserves political continuity for the voters; more than 92% of the population will be in the same district in the new plan as they were under the old plan.

According to the 2010 Census, the ideal Senatorial district has a population of 163,691, which is roughly 5,000 more people than the ideal population in the 2001 plan. The new districts range in population from 4.83% below the ideal population to 4.93% above the ideal, and their average population

deviation is 3.06%, well within constitutional population equality standards for legislative redistricting plans.

At the same time, the Committee was able to draw districts that divide fewer municipalities than the current plan did, and the proposed new plan reduces, by two, the number of districts that encompass territory in more than one county.

In 2001, the Committee was able, for the first time, to create two districts in Boston in which members of racial and ethnic minority groups constituted a majority of the district's population. The plan that the Committee is reporting out today consolidates those two Boston districts along lines proposed by a broad coalition of civil rights and civic organizations. Moreover, the plan increases the number of such majority-minority districts from two to three with the addition of one new majority-minority district in Hampden County. This new district is a natural outgrowth of the increasing minority populations in Springfield.

While cognizant that it was including these three majority-minority districts in its plan, the Committee did not subordinate traditional redistricting principles to race. The proposed majority-minority districts, like the other districts in the proposed plan, reflect and preserve political continuity, neighborhoods and other communities of interest to the extent possible given the population constraints on the new districts and other traditional redistricting principles.

The bill also sets forth revised councillor districts based upon the proposed new senatorial districts. As the Constitution of the Commonwealth requires, each of the proposed new councillor districts is composed of five contiguous senatorial districts.

For the Committee,

Stanley C. Rosenberg  
Senate Chair  
Special Joint Committee on Redistricting